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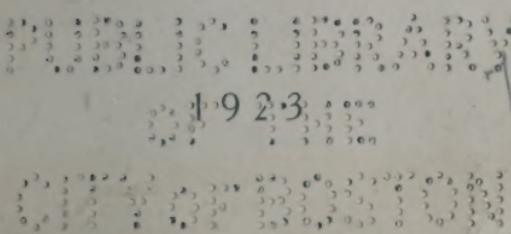
HOW TO USE THE STUDY COURSE IN MUSIC UNDERSTANDING

A Manual of Suggestions for Clubs

BY

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HOW TO USE THE STUDY COURSE

IN approaching the subject of our *Study Course in Music Understanding* and the best way to present it, we must bear in mind that these study-programs are not lecture recitals, to be presented by one person to an audience composed of Club Members, but occasions when *everyone* must participate.

In order to provide the material for eight study-programs each book in the Course contains this number of chapters. Clubs that devote more than eight programs a year to definite study may well devote two meetings to some of the chapters, for the subject matter of each is rich, and with collateral reading may be readily amplified.

Each member should have her own book and seriously study each chapter, not only to enjoy the interesting subject matter, but to impress upon her own memory the important facts contained therein. It is not possible, except in Clubs where there is only a small circle of fifteen or twenty, to have general discussion. In order, however, that everyone may feel that she has a part in the exposition of the lessons, the following method of conducting the program is suggested.

Naturally, each club's Chairman of the Course of Study for the year, will have entire supervision of all of the study-programs, and will arrange and systematize the method to be used in presenting them.

It would be well, however, for her to have a different *Assisting Chairman* for each separate date, if practicable. This Assisting Chairman should have on her committee from three to ten other club members according to the size of the club. This group will constitute the working unit to present one program. The personnel of the assisting members should change upon each occasion, so that during the eight programs included in each book of the Study Course practically the entire membership of the Club will have been called upon.

To make a success of these study meetings, the Chairman should meet with the members of the committee and work out with them every detail well in advance of each study session. These preliminary committee meetings will give those taking part opportunity for rehearsal.

A blackboard will be found of great assistance in copying illustrations from the book, in order that the whole assembly may sing from a large clear copy. It will also be found useful for many other purposes. In the chapters are many illustrations of instrumental and vocal music which should be performed, for they will enliven and give variety to the occasion.

It must, however, be kept in mind that these illustrations are not given to *entertain* the Club Members, but to *illustrate and fix in mind* the facts set forth in the text of the lesson. The music need not necessarily be played in its entirety; but whatever is done should be well prepared and beautifully executed by your best musicians. Explanatory remarks should precede and may be made during the performance.

The person best qualified to present the subject matter of the chapter, speaking from notes (not reading a prepared paper), should open the program. Quotations may be made from the book, but lengthy excerpts should be avoided. An outside professional musician in some cases may be engaged to lead the study hour, giving authoritative and helpful assistance, and several times during the season, it may be possible to engage professional lecturers on musical subjects to give an afternoon of music, illustrating the subject of study. This will be very delightful to the members and will fix in their minds all of the points which they have been studying. Several of such entertainments through the season will add greatly to the enjoyment and profit of the Club.

At least two on each of the eight Committees, should be appointed to take up the books listed at the end of each chapter for collateral reading. Their minds should be stored with the information in these books, so that they may really illumine any vague point by their own wider understanding of the subject expressed in a concise but informal manner.

The Librarian of each Club should appeal to the Public Library to obtain the reference books listed at the end of each chapter in each volume. The *National Association of Librarians* has passed a resolution to assist the *N. F. M. C.* in building up Music Libraries, so you need have no fear in making this request of the Librarian in your Public Library.

Two other members should collaborate in getting information concerning the contemporary art and literature and political conditions, of the countries mentioned in each chapter or lesson. The social conditions and Court life in the times of Bach,

Haydn, Handel, Mozart and Schubert, and of the Russian, Scandinavian, Italian, French and English composers, from whose works frequent illustrations will be made, will be worth describing. The customs of the common people deeply affected the development of music and must be considered.

Pictures of scenery and fine buildings, photographs of composers and great leaders of the times in church and state, will arouse interest and will be effective in bringing the right atmosphere into the discussion. An opportunity to see copies of old missals or manuscripts of music written in the old style, if obtainable, would add immeasurably to the occasion. Even old ecclesiastical vestments or anything in the character of costume used in the times when music had its early start, in some inexplicable way will deepen our understanding concerning what influenced the beginnings of this "Divine Art." This suggestion, applied to the presentation of each succeeding chapter, will open a vast field of information concerning contemporaneous conditions.

The only way to really become deeply interested and broadly informed on these subjects, is to saturate the mind with information from every source available, so that the underlying principles and many elements which have entered into the building up of our musical art, become thoroughly understood.

That emphasis be given to the *subject matter* of the lesson, only a limited number of minutes can be given to each person who speaks on these related subjects.

Every possibility of calling the entire membership into united action should be employed. For instance the clapping of hands to mark the rhythm of music as suggested in Chapter II in *The Fundamen-*

tals of Music. Also the singing of folksongs, Gregorian chants and other illustrations of the text should be participated in by all.

At the close of each chapter are listed talking-machine records and player-rolls available for illustrating each subject. They should be used to supplement the living voice or performer and will prove valuable to many Clubs with small membership and limited time.

It will be found worthwhile to supply papers and pencils so that the members may take a little test at the end of each program, writing a short answer to the questions listed at the end of each chapter. Knowledge is more surely fixed in the mind, if once written. This little test will be found very helpful to all the members if they enter into it with good nature and do not look upon it as a hardship, but rather as an opportunity to impress upon their minds points which they already understand but may forget.

After the subject matter of the program has been well presented, the meeting should be opened for general discussion and opportunity given for those who wish to ask questions. It would be well for the Chairman of the Day to prearrange with several people to ask questions, so that the timid ones will be given courage to "speak up" themselves, whereas they otherwise might remain silent, while desiring very much to gain some special information.

The afternoon, however, should not be closed with the round table discussion, but a summing-up of the entire matter should be made in a very interesting way by the leader, and one or two fine illustrative selections be given to bring an artistic finish to the afternoon. In this way each member of the committee will be used.

With plans maturing for the administration of examinations on the Course of Study at the end of the year, surely it is worthwhile for every member to make a serious study of each book in the Course as it appears, both for its own sake and as a necessary preparation for the books that follow it. The examinations are not compulsory, but every Club will have pride in entering a certain number of its members. If we carry out the plan for simultaneous examinations, and award certificates, you will want your Club to have a high percentage of members passing the required mark.

As the entire Course in its broad sense leads directly to the *appreciation* of music, so each chapter in each book contributes a necessary element to its true understanding. No chapter and no book can therefore be slighted. As club members you are all music listeners. The great aim of this unique Course is—the cultivation of *discriminating* listeners.

Hoping that these few suggestions may make your study-programs easier to carry on, and foreseeing great cultural advancement throughout our organization as a result of adopting this *Study Course in Music Understanding*, I am

Yours for Music,

Gertrude F. Seiberling

(*Mrs. Frank A. Seiberling*)
First Patron and
Chairman, Course of Study

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